

REMARKS

A total of 34 claims remain in the present application. The present paper is in response to the Office Action mailed July 9, 2007, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- claims 2-8, 10-15, 19-21 and 23-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid).

The Examiner's various claim rejections are believed to be traversed in view of the following discussion.

United States Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid) teaches a Presence Awareness system and methods, which enable a user to specify the amount and type of presence awareness information that will be made available to other users of the system. Each user is provided with a user interface (FIG. 1 @ 102-104) which interacts with a respective Presence Awareness (PA) controller (FIG. 1 @, 106-108) of the system. The PA controllers interact with the PA server 109 to implement the functionality of the system. According to Godefroid:

“The collaborative communications system 100 (hereinafter referred to as Presence Awareness (PA) System) of FIG. 1 includes the following functions.

It allows users to inquire about more sophisticated (and sensitive) kinds of presence information about others.

It allows users to dynamically specify their presence awareness policies, in order to control others' access to their own presence information.” [Col 4, lines 40-48]

“In the PA system 100, the PA Database 105 and PA Server 109 form a centralized database which stores all awareness information, such as all users' private data, users' activities, and awareness preferences settings. More specifically, the following data are included for all users:

the time a user is logged on and logged out; the time a user's screen saver is activated and deactivated the start time and end time of a collaborative session, who initiated the session, who are involved in the session, and who received the invitation but did not accept;

a user's accessibility settings, for example the user's willingness to engage in interactions (door status), who is allowed to see which part of the user private data, who can check the user's availability, who can only see the availability conclusion and who can see how the conclusion is reached as well, exception rules, and so forth.” [col 7, lines 45-62]

According to Godefroid, the exchange of presence information is controlled in accordance with one or more respective “Presence Awareness policies”

At column 8 lines 40-43, Godefroid teaches that a user’s “presence information “may include their door status, availability information, location, calendar information, phone number, email address, or the like.” However, apart from a broad statement that the user’s awareness preference information may indicate the “user's willingness to engage in interactions (door status)”, Godefroid is completely silent about the use of profiles to indicate a user’s “respective set of preferences ... for participating in each one of a plurality of different types of communications”. More particularly, providing a user’s e-mail address and phone number(s) in their profile may indicate the user’s *ability* to engage in various types of communication, but says nothing about their *willingness* or *desire* to do so. For example, a user may be willing to receive e-mails, but unwilling to engage in text messaging sessions. Godefroid provides no mechanism by which this type of control over communications can be implemented by the user.

It is noted that, in the system of Godefroid, a user could conceivably create different profiles with different communications information. For example, a profile might be created that includes a telephone number, but not an e-mail address, and so indicating the user’s willingness to receive telephone calls, and their unwillingness to engage in types of communications that require use of the email address. However, Godefroid does not teach that the communications information (email address and phone number) provided in the user’s

“awareness information” is used in this manner. Even if it were, the person of ordinary skill in the art will recognise that this arrangement is actually too crude to be of any practical use. In particular, consider a scenario in which a user has created a profile which does not include their e-mail address, and where this is used to control communications with the user. In this scenario, the system would respond by preventing all types of communications to the user which rely on the (missing) email address. This would mean that the user would not receive either e-mails or instant messaging, since both types of communications rely on the e-mail address. However, Godefroid provides not means by which the user can select which type of communications is permitted, and which is blocked. Thus, for example, the user would not be able to block instant messaging without also blocking e-mails. Godefroid provides no means of solving this problem.

In contrast, the present invention provides a method and system in which the user’s presence and availability information contains “communications information defining a respective set of preferences of the team member for participating in each one of a plurality of different types of communications”. As noted at page 38 lines 3-25 of the original specification, for example, this information will normally include “information detailing any types of communications in which the team member prefers to participate, along with a device identifier and/or a device address (such as a PSTN Destination Number (DN), an IP address or an e-mail address) of a communications device that the team member can use to participate in communications.” (underlining added) Godefroid provide no equivalent information.

At best, Godefroid enables a user to input email address and telephone information, but this information is not connected to any specific *types* of communication in which the user wishes to participate, and thus it cannot define “a respective set of preferences of the team member for participating in each one of a plurality of different types of communications” as required by the present invention.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that United States Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid) fails to teach or fairly suggest all of the features of the presently claimed invention.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-5113.

Respectfully submitted,

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